

# Capitol Report

**News & Updates from Your State Capitol**  
**By Arkansas Secretary of State Charlie Daniels**

## Arkansas Sees 65% Turnout in General Election

Arkansans turned out in record numbers for the General Election and Nonpartisan Judicial Runoff on November 4, 2008. The preliminary and unofficial turnout was around 65 percent based on initial returns from the counties. While that percentage does not top the record set in 1980 at 77 percent, the unofficial total of more than 1.07 million is the most ever to vote in an Arkansas election.

As of our publication date, election results were not yet official as counties worked to count overseas ballots and submit final totals to the Secretary of State's office by the Nov. 19 deadline. Once all reports are in, Secretary of State Charlie Daniels will certify the final results for the state.

In 2004, 1,054,945 voters or 63 percent of all registered voters turned out in the general election. 1996's turnout percentage matched this year's with 65 percent.

### The Big Winners

Although Democratic nominee Barack Obama won the election nationwide, Arkansans voted overwhelmingly for Republican John McCain, who carried 58 percent of the vote in unofficial results. The state's Congressional delegation will remain unchanged with Sen. Mark Pryor, Rep. Vic Snyder, Rep. John Boozeman and Rep. Mike Ross defeating their Green Party opponents.

(See **EARLY** continued on Page 2)

## General Improvement Funds Enable Basement Roof Repairs

The State Capitol's restoration projects continue with a combination of planned and unexpected repairs over the summer. The work is part of the Secretary of State's ongoing plan to repair and preserve the building from the weather, time and use that have taken their toll over the past 90 years.

### Lower Level Roof

In September, Secretary of State Charlie Daniels announced a project to repair the basement roof of the Capitol. The ground-level surface had been patched numerous times over two decades, but leaks have continued to be a frequent problem, especially during heavy rains.

The repair project consists of peeling back layers of roofing material, installing a waterproof membrane, and topping it with a layer of concrete and composite roof

materials. The work will be completed by the end of the year.

The project is estimated to cost \$546,808. It will be funded from two sources: \$148,962 remaining from a \$1.2 million Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council (ANCRC) grant and \$307,568 in general improvement funds released by Governor Mike Beebe for his project.

(See **CAPITOL** continued on Page 3)



*It has truly been an extraordinary year for voting in Arkansas and around the nation. Whatever the cause, it was remarkable to see a genuine passion for the right to vote across all demographics. Perhaps this is an encouraging sign that the long downward trend in voter participation has turned for the better.*

*About a quarter of the state's 1.68 million registered voters cast their ballot early or by absentee – up 5 percent over the 2004 record. While at times that resulted in long lines at several polling sites, I was extremely moved that so many voters would not be deterred. Arkansans were extremely motivated to cast their ballot, and I hope that trend continues. Early voting helps ease some of the Election Day pressures on officials and it gives voters the chance to go when it's convenient over a two-week period.*

*We also saw a number of races that were decided by the slimmest of margins. Just 30 votes determined the assessor's race in Chicot County, and less than 75 votes separated the candidates for House District 38.*

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*But the closest call of all was the race for mayor in Pine Bluff where a single vote would have prevented a runoff election. Proof that yes, every vote really does matter.*

*Now with election season behind us, we can look forward to something a little more lighthearted – Christmas at the Capitol.*

*Crews have been working for weeks to put all the lights in place for our grand lighting ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 6. It's always such a pleasure for me to open the doors of the Capitol to the hundreds of Arkansans who join us that night, and I especially enjoy showing off all the work we've done to restore the building, both inside and out. With the colorful decorations and all the families inside, the Capitol is, without a doubt, at its most beautiful time.*

*I invite you to join us for the ceremony after the Big Jingle Jubilee Parade through downtown Little Rock. Following the lighting and fireworks, come inside to enjoy live holiday music and visit with Santa. To read more about the Lighting Ceremony and all the other holiday events at the Capitol, turn to page 5 inside. I hope to see you there.*

*I wish a joyful Christmas and a happy holiday season to you and yours!*

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## More Than 140,000 Students Vote in Mock Election

Students in Arkansas disagreed with their adult counterparts, making Senator Barack Obama their choice for the next President of the United States during the National Student/Parent Mock Election held October 30.

The student results in the race for President and Vice President were for 49,088 for Senator Barack Obama and Senator Joe Biden and 34,393 for Senator John McCain and Governor Sarah Palin.

Around 140,000 students from about 500 schools statewide participated in Mock Election Day, which serves to educate students from kindergarten to 12th grade on the importance of voting by actively involving them in a full-fledged campaign and national election.

"Student mock elections are a valuable exercise in democracy for our future voters and civic leaders," Secretary of State Charlie Daniels said. "Every election year, we seem to have more participants and more enthusiasm for the process. Through this program, our youth get to have a voice

in determining the future of our state and country."

The Arkansas mock ballot included all of the statewide races and the five ballot issues. Fifth grade gifted and talented students from Gibbs International Magnet Elementary School in Little Rock tallied the votes from a tabulation station in the Capitol's second floor rotunda.

For more information on the National Student/Parent Mock Election, visit the Arkansas Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.arkansas.gov/mockelection/](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/mockelection/) and [www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org).



Students from Gibbs Elementary man the phones during Mock Election

## Dec. 31 Last Chance to File Franchise Taxes

The Business & Commercial Services Division has notified almost 19,000 entities in danger of forfeiting their corporate charters due to unpaid franchise taxes and required reporting. Payment of all franchise taxes, with penalty and interest, is due by Dec. 31, 2008. Delinquent entities will move from "not current" status to "revoked" on Jan. 1, 2009. Entities may file online at [www.sos.arkansas.gov](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov) or contact the BCS office at (501) 682-3409 or (888) 233-0325.

(ELECTION Continued from front page)

### Early Voting

Early voting proved to be more popular than ever for Arkansans. Early and absentee ballots accounted for almost 40 percent of all votes and 25 percent of all registered voters.

Voters in a number of locations waited in long lines to cast their ballot and Secretary of State Charlie Daniels said election officials will evaluate where additional voting machines or poll workers are needed.

"But the fact that so many people were willing to stand in line shows just how important this election was," Daniels said.

The early vote total of around 385,000 breaks the previous early vote record in

2004 of 300,350. This year's absentee ballot total is around 10,000 less than 2004's total of 44,729.

### Voter Registration

A last-minute surge in new voter registrations was an early indicator that turnout would be strong.

In the week leading up to the Oct. 6 registration deadline, the Secretary of State's office processed more than 22,000 applications, including a one-day high of 6,400. With more than 100,000 new voter registrations added in 2008, Arkansas's total reached 1.68 million registered voters for the Nov. 4 General Election.



(CAPITOL continued from front page)

"I commend Governor Beebe for allocating general improvement dollars towards the maintenance of our irreplaceable and beloved State Capitol," Daniels said. "An investment in restoration and repair of this building is one we cannot afford to ignore. I want the State Capitol to look just as magnificent 50 years from now as it did over 90 years ago when it was new. Its significance and symbolism is timeless."

## Rotunda Banister

The second-floor rotunda area required urgent repairs when Buildings & Grounds Director Steve Brummett discovered a loose section in the marble banister overlooking the first floor. Arkansas Granite & More of Benton spent a week reinforcing the loosened piece and re-grouting the entire banister. The company also repaired chips in the marble dating from 1992 when workers hoisting a 3,000-pound Christmas tree broke the banister in two places.

## Bronze doors

The prized Tiffany bronze doors that grace the Capitol's main second-floor entrance also required unexpected repairs when its internal hinge malfunctioned during routine cleaning this summer. No blueprints for the massive doors were known to exist, so staff members contacted Tiffany & Co., as well as the New-York Historical Society for clues on how to remove and repair the original mechanism. Ultimately, a company was



located that specializes in restoring monumental doors, F.E. Ciccone & Co., of New Hampshire.

Frank Ciccone inspected each of the six doors, then custom-manufactured replacement flush bolts and pivot hinges to refurbish non-operable components. Workers also conducted preventative maintenance, including adjustment and lubrication of the ball bearings that support each 1,000-pound door. Prior to his departure, Ciccone instructed Capitol personnel

on additional care and conditioning techniques, which have been added to the continual maintenance schedule for the State Capitol.

## Law Enforcement Memorial

Work has extended onto the Capitol grounds as well, with the renovation of a prominent memorial on the south mall. The Law Enforcement Officers Memorial was dedicated in 1994 to the memory and service of the men and women who lost their lives in the line of duty. This fall crews added a flagpole in the center of the shrine, cleaned the stonework and raised the lettering on the outside of the monument to improve visibility. The work was partially funded through donations from the Memorial Committee.

## Business Office

Renovations were recently completed for the Secretary of State's business office space on the Capitol's lower level. The reorganized area makes better use of available square footage and creates a more efficient workspace.

## Business Advisors Review 2008 Stats, Consider UCC Updates

The Business and Commercial Services Advisory Council held its fall meeting with Secretary Daniels and BCS staff in late October.

Daniels appointed the council in 2006 to provide input and serve as a sounding board for potential changes in BCS policy and related legislation. Its 17 members hail from a variety of professions that interact with BCS, ranging from attorneys to chamber of commerce directors, elected officials to communications companies.

Following opening comments from Secretary Daniels, BCS staff updated the committee on statistics from the past year. These included the increase in franchise tax collections and increased use of the online filing systems.

Staff also reviewed the results of annual report filings for limited partnerships and nonprofit corporations. Both of these entities were required to file an annual report for the first time in 2008, and about one-third met that new requirement. The council discussed several ideas to increase this rate.

The council discussed issues pertaining to Arkansas notaries public, including the possibility of developing basic legislation setting minimum requirements for the use of electronic notarization. These requirements would most likely be based on the electronic notarization standards developed by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS).

Discussion also focused on the need to formalize a notary bond claim process. Currently, claims that are filed against a notary public are handled by the notary's bonding company. There is no protocol to notify the Secretary of State about pending claims. Proposed changes in the process would require such notification.

Council members heard an update on the Uniform Commercial Code – RA9 administrative rules project. The revised rules are in the final drafting phase and will be distributed to interested parties when finalized. The new rules are based on the model rules that were developed by the International Association of Commercial Administrators.



## Staffer Celebrates New Citizenship by Voting Early

Secretary of State employee Vipin Nischal became a naturalized citizen on Sept. 29 during a ceremony in Memphis, Tenn., just in time to become a registered Arkansas voter.

Born in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, Nischal came to work in the United States in January 1999 and joined the Secretary of State's Information Technology Division in October 2003. Nischal is a computer programmer and provides software support for all the Secretary of State's divisions. Although his duties include working with the Elections office, Nischal hasn't enjoyed the privilege of casting a vote himself. Until now.

"Vipin's work has been invaluable to our Elections Division," said Secretary of State Charlie Daniels, "We're very proud that he's now officially among the citizens he's served so well."

To welcome Nischal as a new citizen Secretary Daniels presented Vipin with a Capitol Citation and a U.S. Flag that flew over the State Capitol on the day of his naturalization. How did Vipin celebrate? He voted early in the Presidential Election.



## Coming Soon: *The Arkansas Historical Report 2008*

Arkansas Secretary of State Charlie Daniels is proud to announce the publication of the 2008 edition of the *Arkansas Historical Report*. It is currently in production and will be available to the public in February 2009.

Published just once each decade by order of the General Assembly, this ready reference is a unique compendium of appointed and elected officials over the state's colonial and territorial periods as well as its 172-year history. Its comprehensive listings of county, state and federal officials make it a must-have for historians, journalists, genealogists and other researchers.

Printed and distributed by the University of Arkansas Press, the 2008 edition also features essays by C. Fred Williams, Jay Barth, David Ware, Ann Early and George Sabo III that provide insight into the state's history, politics and Native American cultures. This new edition of the *Historical Report* includes, for the first time, an alphabetical index of state legislators. It also features a variety of historical photographs and has been substantially redesigned to create a more user-friendly reference tool.

Watch for information on how to order your copy in February. Visit [www.sos.arkansas.gov](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov).

## Fall at the State Capitol







# Capitol Report – Holiday Edition

## It's an Old-Time Christmas at the State Capitol

The state's holiday season officially begins Saturday, December 6, with the annual holiday lighting ceremony at the State Capitol. With crafts, music, fireworks and even a visit from old St. Nick, it's an evening of fun for the whole family.

Beginning at 4 p.m., children's craft tents will open to entertain youngsters while they wait for the Big Jingle Jubilee Holiday Parade. Then at dusk, the celebration on the Capitol grounds begins. Representatives from the Easter Seals Society will help Secretary of State Charlie Daniels illuminate the Capitol with hundreds of thousands of lights outlining the building. The grand lighting ceremony concludes with a magnificent fireworks show above the gleaming Capitol dome.



Afterward, families can venture inside the Capitol to see a winter wonderland of decorations and enjoy performances by the Top of the Rock Chorus. Plus, the most anticipated man of the holiday season will make an appearance to welcome the children and find out who's been naughty or nice!

The theme for this year's festivities is "An Old-Time Christmas," a nod to the long tradition of holiday celebrations at the State Capitol.

"One of this administration's goals has been to restore the Capitol to its historic presence, and we continue that effort during the holiday season," Daniels explained. The theme honors the tradition of lighting of the State Capitol that began in 1938. That's when Secretary of State C.G. "Crip" Hall lit the dome as a Christmas gift to patients nearby at what was then the Arkansas Children's Infirmary.



The George Jernigan Tree will continue its place as the state's official Christmas tree. A live cedar planted on the front lawn in 1976, the tree will be decorated with hundreds of sparkling lights. Inside, the Rotunda Tree will be adorned with large hand-painted globe ornaments, each depicting a unique scene from the state's 75 counties.

Families will find wonderful photo opportunities around the building – including the frosty bridge in the first floor rotunda, the ribbon-lined staircases and other settings.

### Presents from the Past

This year's special holiday exhibit will be a treasure trove for kids of all ages. This display will focus on vintage and

modern dolls, drawn from private collectors and the Jefferson County Museum in Pine Bluff. Besides three-dimensional dolls of all kinds, the exhibit will include representations of dolls, such as old advertising cutouts and doll-related poetry. Also on display will be the crowd-pleasing train set and Christmas village. The exhibit will be on display December 1 through New Year's Day.



### Sounds of the Season



Music of the holiday season will flow through the halls of the Capitol during the weeks of December 8 through December 19. More than 120 school choirs and dance troupes will perform in the Capitol rotunda each weekday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It's a highlight of the season for the performers and State Capitol staff members, as well as the many family members who also make the trip to Little Rock.

### Pearl Harbor Remembrance

The annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance reminds us to stay hopeful for peace, not only during the holiday season, but continually throughout the year. Always a moving service, the ceremony is held in the rotunda on Sunday, December 7, to salute the veterans of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Blue lights just above the Capitol's front entrance spell out "Peace" in their honor.



### Collectible Ornaments

The series of collectible Capitol ornaments continues this year with a tribute to the grand bronze doors, which were designed by Capitol architect Cass Gilbert and manufactured by Tiffany Studios in New York. The ornament is available in the Capitol Gift Shop or online at [www.sos.arkansas.gov](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov).



Find more information, a schedule of choral performances and pictures of the season on our holiday website. Follow the link from [www.sos.arkansas.gov](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov).





## Charlie Daniels

Secretary of State  
Room 256 State Capitol  
Little Rock, AR 72201-1094  
[www.sos.arkansas.gov](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov)  
501.682.1010

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